

Minister's Message – December 2004

Birthdays

Birthdays are an exciting time. It is great to get gifts on your birthday. Family and friends send you cards and gifts and you may even get a card from the local real estate agent. This is what we are used to here in Australia. Imagine my shock when in India on my birthday all my friends were waiting for me to them a gift. It was **my** birthday and they expected me to given **them** gifts!

Just over 2000 years ago, in the village of Bethlehem, a child was born to Mary and Joseph. They called him Jesus which means 'one who saves'. Why do so many people still remember this man's birthday? It is because of who he is and what he has done.

Who is Jesus? He is not just a man but is also God. Mary was told by an angel of God that she had conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. Her child would be the *Word (God) become flesh and dwelt among us*. Jesus was born of a virgin as foretold many years before by the prophet Isaiah (7:14). Jesus knew of his virgin birth, declaring that he was sent by his heavenly Father into this world. Jesus is uniquely man and God; he is God the Son come into this world. Well might the world remember his birthday! Note we do not say who was Jesus, but who is Jesus, because even though he died he rose again and is alive today.

What did Jesus do? Being God and man (God incarnate) we might expect great things from him and we are not disappointed. As we remember his birthday we remember his great gift to us. What is that gift? The treasures of this world were given to Jesus at his birth – gold frankincense and myrrh. Such gifts will get used up or will perish – like everything in this world. But Jesus' gift to the world is something that will never perish. He gave his life – *he laid down his life for us* – that we might live. Through this sacrifice Jesus gives life, life eternal, to those who come to him and receive this wonderful gift.

Have you received this gift from Jesus? You can by coming to him and believing in him? In this case it is more blessed to receive than to give!

Rev. Dr. Dennis K. Muldoon